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Animal Crackers

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Animal Crackers

AKC Awards

The American Kennel Club gives Awards for Canine Excellence (ACE) to express its respect for the extraordinary canine-human bond as well as its appreciation for the innumerable ways in which dogs contribute to our lives. To qualify for an ACE, a dog is required to be AKC-registered or -registrable, and have performed an exemplary act, whether large or seemingly small, that has significantly benefited a community or individual. One award (\$1,000 and an engraved sterling silver collar medallion) is given every year in five categories. The following are the 2003 winners.

Law Enforcement: "Ordi," a seven-year-old male German shepherd, has worked with his partner at the O'Fallon, Mo. Police Department for more than six years. Ordi is cross-trained in patrol work and narcotics detection. Ordi is losing his vision and must retire, but now has a new vocation—visiting children at the Missouri School for the Blind. He continues to serve his community by demonstrating to students what can be accomplished through perseverance in the face of adversity.

Search and Rescue: "Pepper," a thirteen-year old male German shepherd in Croyden, Pa., served as a highly successful search-and-rescue dog for 12 years with local police and fire departments. He also worked with New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Police in searches for young children, Alzheimer's patients, and drowning victims. Retired from search and rescue, Pepper continues to work as a therapy dog; in fact, he and his owners were instrumental in starting a therapy program at Shriners Hospital in Philadelphia.

Therapy: "Josie," a six-year-old female Cardigan Welsh corgi, and her owner have made more than 500 visits to the Ronald McDonald House and hospitals in the Cleveland area. Josie possesses an uncommon ability to bond with critically ill and handicapped children. Josie's front leg was amputated because of an infection at birth. A surgeon met Josie and realized she could inspire children to overcome their own handicaps. She has elicited miraculous responses from extremely ill children.

Service: "Brock," a six-year-old male golden retriever in New York City, is friend and partner to his owner, an actor with cerebral palsy. Brock takes the place of crutches and provides

necessary assistance, such as help in negotiating stairs, crossing slippery pavements, and carrying a knapsack.

Companion: "Sadie," an eight-year-old vizsla, was abandoned and tied to the door of an antique store in Texas, with a note stating her name, age, and medication. She was rescued and placed in a home with a son who has a vascular disease that requires him to walk for improved circulation. He was reluctant to take walks before Sadie came into his life. They bonded and now Mike loves to take Sadie for long walks. Their special relationship exemplifies the canine-human bond at its best.

Book Review

The Kennel Club's Illustrated Breed Standards, revised edition. Kennel Club. (London: Ebury Press, 2003). \$60.00.

This handsome book gives all the breed standards recognized by the Kennel Club (United Kingdom). It is correct as of September 2002. All editions follow the same format—breeds are described by general appearance characteristics, temperament, head and skull, eyes, ears, mouth neck, forequarters, body, hindquarters, feet, tail, gait/movement, color, and size. A statement at the end of each standard states that any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault, and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect on the health and welfare of the dog. Under "tail," in those breeds customarily docked, there is a description of the docked and undocked tail.

One hundred eighty breed standards are described in the book, but with varieties in six breeds (two German spitz, four Belgian shepherds, six dachshunds, two Chihuahuas, and three poodles) the total is 192. The American Kennel Club has 150 breeds eligible for competition at championship shows. Adding the varieties (three cocker spaniels, two beagles, three dachshunds, three poodles, two English toy spaniels, two Chihuahuas, two bull terriers, two collies, and two Manchester terriers), the total is 162.

There are seven groups in Britain—hound, gundog, terrier, utility (AKC nonsporting), working, pastoral (AKC herding), and toy. The miniature schnauzer is in the utility group rather than the terrier group, as it is in

America.

Intended as a guide for judges, this book should be of interest to all those interested in purebred dogs. It is a must-have for the serious fancier.

Turkish Angora Cats

The Turkish Angora, a medium-sized, long-haired cat is an old breed originating near the Turkish city of Angora, now known as Ankara. The cats were exported in the 1600s to France and Britain and are believed to have made their way to America with the early settlers. Today they rank in the lower third of registered purebreds with an estimated 6,000 to 9,000 Angoras residing in the United States and Canada.

Almost always, the breed is pictured as white and blue-eyed, but it comes in a number of colors, including solid coal black. Unfortunately, an all-white cat has about a 50 percent chance of deafness. It is said that these deaf cats are trainable, responding to sign language. Possibly their refined senses of sight and smell offset the deafness.

The Angora is a very active cat and needs to be in a home where it is around people. It has no undercoat, so its silky-smooth coat is easily maintained.

Breed Bans

Although certain breeds tend to appear more frequently in bite statistics, no reliable scientific evidence shows that particular breeds are consistently more aggressive than others. Even if they were, the "dangerous" individual dogs would still represent only a very small proportion of the breed. Yet breed bans penalize all the dogs in a breed, including the harmless majority. Breed-specific legislation may include requiring muzzles in public places and extra insurance premiums. Many breeds have been targeted: American Staffordshire terriers, bull terriers, Neapolitan mastiffs, Briards, chow chows, Dobermans, Rhodesian ridgebacks, and more. Dog bites and fatalities are more reflective of a breed's popularity than its propensity to bite. Even Labradors, golden retrievers, and cocker spaniels have been involved in dog-related deaths.

Organizations studying the problem acknowledge that no one breed has a propensity to bite humans more than others. In most

(continued on next page)



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In honor of a special animal:

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In memory of a special animal:

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Ms. Cynthia A. Madden in honor of "BAILEY" & "KELSEY"
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Animal Crackers

(continued from previous page)

instances of bites, the owner is at fault—by neglect, purposeful training toward aggression, or even misguided efforts to breed larger, more "macho" dogs.

Socialization and training are critically important in producing the temperament of an individual dog. The Rottweiler and American Staffordshire terrier score as high or higher in temperament tests than dogs traditionally considered family-oriented or safe.

The American Kennel Club has issued the following statement in response to legislation that singles out specific breeds:

"The American Kennel Club supports reasonable, enforceable, nondiscriminatory laws to govern the ownership of dogs. The AKC believes that dog owners should be responsible for their dogs. We support laws that: establish a fair process by which specific dogs are identified as "dangerous" based on stated, measurable actions; impose appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners; and establish a well-defined method for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous. We believe that, if necessary, dogs proven to be "dangerous" may need to be humanely destroyed. The American Kennel Club strongly opposes any legislation that determines a dog to be "dangerous" based on specific breeds or phenotypic classes of dogs."